

## II. PROJECT METHODOLOGY

### A. Historic Context Narrative

The process of creating the historic context began with developing a reference bibliography. It contains references on agriculture and farm life, 1830-1940, organized into several sections.

#### Secondary Sources

- Delaware Historical Archaeology, New Castle and Kent Counties
  - Cultural Resource Management Projects (Phase I and II)
  - Data Recovery Excavations (Phase III)
  - Articles, Publications, Dissertations, Theses Presented or Unpublished Papers
  - Management Plans
- Delaware Historic Architecture, New Castle and Kent Counties
- Delaware History, New Castle and Kent Counties
- American Historical Archaeology and History

#### Primary Sources, New Castle and Kent Counties

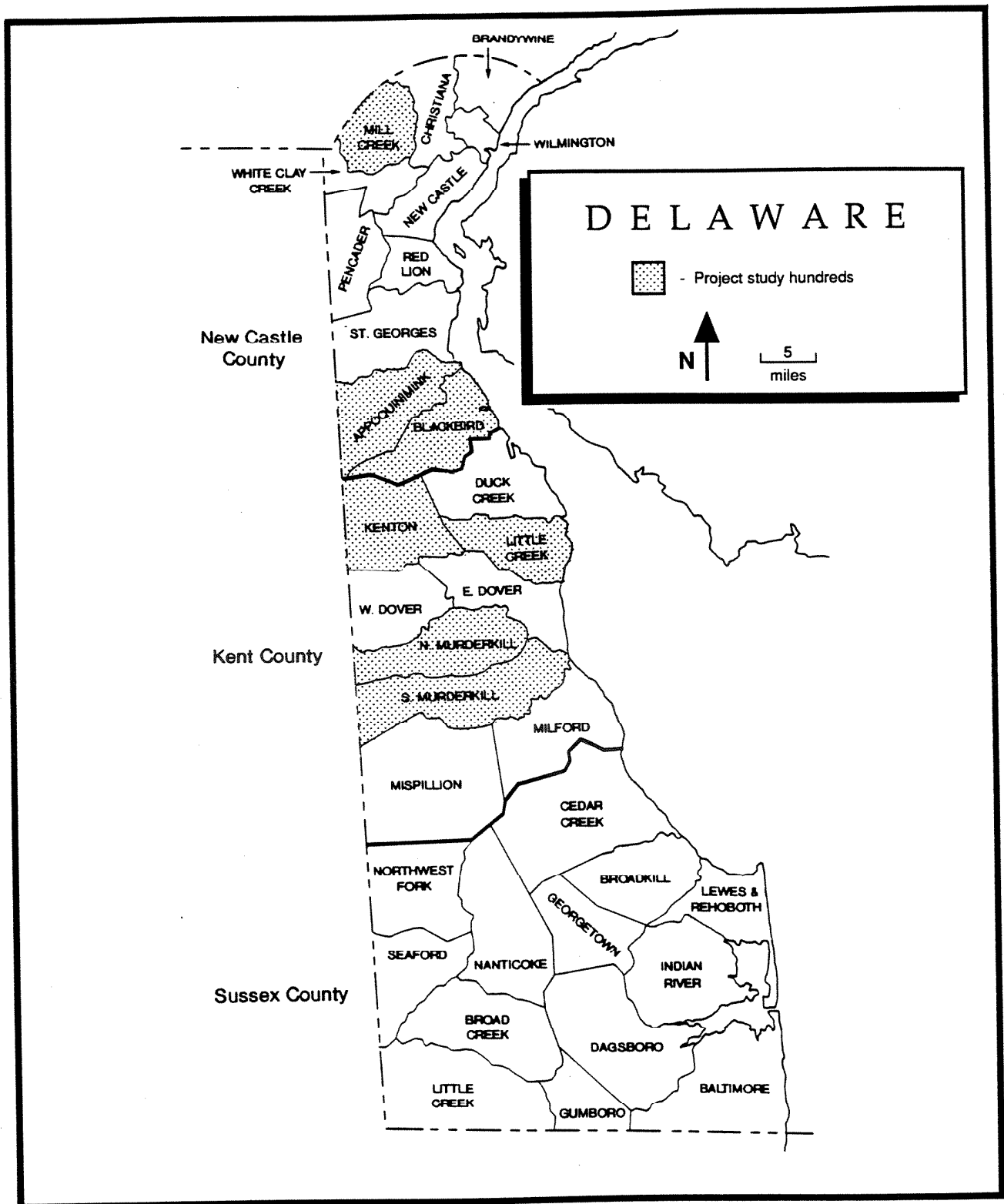
- Account and Day Books, and other Family Papers
- Published Agricultural Journals
- Atlases
- Court Records
- State Directories
- Estate and Probate Records
- Tax Assessment Records
- Journals and Diaries
- Maps
- Newspapers
- Photographs
- United States Census

To supplement the secondary literature, a program of primary research was designed. This research focused on sources not previously analyzed by Delaware researchers in the ways we proposed. Other researchers have evaluated, analyzed, and interpreted materials from many of the primary sources listed above but not studied directly as part of this project. Thus this historic context narrative has actually been constructed on a substantial base of primary research. The primary research program for this project had several components:

- 1) Analysis of the statistical compendia and abstracts published by the U. S. Census Bureau. For the 1870s through 1940, the statistical abstracts were prepared each year; the compendia were published every ten years between 1840 and 1940. They provided data on Delaware demography, social history, and agriculture.

- 2) Study of a sample of historical photographs depicting aspects of New Castle and Kent county agriculture and farm life prior to 1940. The sample of six photographs were selected from the photographic collections of the Historical Society of Delaware (Hanick 1992; Yasik 1992).
- 3) Content analysis of a sample of Delaware newspapers for the period 1829-1860s. Research focused on advertisements relating to farming (Bengston 1992; Jenkins 1992; Martin 1992). Students analyzed the types of advertisements, their contents and what they revealed about contemporary farms and the farm community, and how regional and national events and natural phenomena like the weather affected farming in the period.
- 4) Analysis of the unpublished farm journal of Richard Mansfield of St. Georges Hundred covering the period 1825-1844 (Scholl 1992). Scholl analyzed two sample years, 1830 and 1835, focusing on the crops grown, the agricultural cycle, and agricultural practices, especially labor practices. He supplemented this analysis with further research on Mansfield, in order to place him in a social, economic, political, and community context.
- 5) Analysis of select tax assessment records, census records, state directories, and maps for four sample study hundreds in New Castle and Kent counties. The first three study hundreds--Appoquinimink Hundred (which includes also present-day Blackbird Hundred) in New Castle County, Little Creek Hundred (which includes also present-day Kenton Hundred), and Murderkill Hundred (today North and South), both in Kent County--were the study hundreds for the project **Agricultural Tenancy in Central Delaware, 1770-1900+/-: A Historic Context** (Siders et al. 1991). The Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering researchers selected these hundreds for several reasons: 1) each represented a geographic band extending across the state, 2) each represented the range of types of agricultural land, from prime to marsh, 3) each had comprehensive historic architectural surveys completed, and 4) a good selection of nineteenth-century tax records survived for each (Siders et al. 1991: xii). For the present project, Mill Creek Hundred in northwestern Delaware was chosen as the representative Piedmont hundred (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2  
 MAP OF DELAWARE SHOWING COUNTIES, AND ALL HUNDREDS,  
 WITH STUDY HUNDREDS MARKED [MILL CREEK, APPOQUINTINK,  
 BLACKBIRD, LITTLE CREEK, KENTON, NORTH AND SOUTH MURDERKILL]



a) Tax Assessment Records

The Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering created computerized data bases for the following tax assessments for each study hundred (Siders et al. 1991: xii):

Appoquinimink	1822	1860	1896
Little Creek	1816	1861	
Murderkill	1822	1860	1896

For detail on these data bases, see Siders et al. 1991: xi-xii. For this project, in addition to these data, computerized data bases (on DBase III+) were created for the 1837 and 1861 Mill Creek Hundred tax assessment records. For each individual listed in the assessment, 23 pieces of information were entered. They document the number of properties each individual owned in the hundred, and for each property, its type--farm (and its acreage), house lot, or lot, the number and construction material of houses, barns, mills, and other outbuildings, a description of the condition of the land, and its value. In addition, the value of livestock and of silver plate owned, the number and value of male and female slaves owned, the individual's poll tax, and finally, his or her total assessment were recorded.

b) U. S. Census of Population, State Directory, and Map Projects

The U. S. Censuses of Population were also studied for the following hundreds and years:

Mill Creek	1850		
Appoquinimink	1850		1870
Little Creek		1860	1870
Murderkill			1870 1880

The following fields of information was collected for each household with at least one member engaged in farming, or listed as a "laborer":

- 1) Name of household head
- 2) Age of household head
- 3) Sex of household head
- 4) Type of household (nuclear, joint, extended, other)
- 5) Number of non-kin members in household
- 6) Number of children under 10 in household
- 7) Number of children 10-18 in household
- 8) Race of household head
- 9) Place of birth of household head
- 10) Occupation of household head and other household members
- 11) Value of real property (not available for 1880)
- 12) Value of personal property (not available for 1880)

A data base format was established on DBase III+ in order to computerize these data. Time constraints limited the data entry to a portion of the 1860 Census for Little Creek Hundred. Basic statistical and comparative analyses were performed, which yielded much information on the social and economic aspects of farming in these hundreds in the middle and late nineteenth century. In addition, efforts were made to locate the households recorded in the census on one of the following maps, depending on the census year: the 1849 Rea and Price Map, the 1859 Byles Map, and the 1868 Beers Atlas. For Murderkill Hundred in 1880, the census information was also linked to the 1882 State Directory (see Benton 1992; Blevins 1992; DiSabatino 1992; Garcia 1992; Hollenberg 1992; Rintoul 1992; Zuk 1992).

University of Delaware students enrolled in "Historical Archaeology of the Eastern United States," Spring 1992, conducted portions of this primary research (see Bengston 1992; Benton 1992; Blevins 1992; DiSabatino 1992; Garcia 1992; Hanick 1992; Hollenberg 1992; Jenkins 1992; Martin 1992; Rintoul 1992; Scholl 1992; Vasik 1992; Zuk 1992).

#### **B. Definition of Archaeological Property Types**

Archaeological property types associated with this historic context have been defined to include farms and the non-farm homes of farm workers. Other property types associated more broadly with Delaware agriculture of this period, such as canneries and other agricultural processing establishments, and off-farm storage and transportation facilities, will be treated in a separate historic context. The findings of previous research by historical archaeologists, architectural historians, and historians, along with the results of the primary research undertaken to prepare the historic context narrative, formed the basis for the definition of archaeological property types.

#### **C. Archaeological Research Questions**

The archaeological research questions associated with this historic context fit the research domain framework developed for the **Management Plan** (De Cunzo and Catts 1990): Domestic Economy; Manufacturing and Trade; Landscape; Social Group Identity, Behavior, and Interaction. Specific research questions posed in the **Management Plan** deemed relevant to this historic context (De Cunzo and Catts 1990: 150-164) were supplemented by those posed by other archaeologists investigating farmsteads and agricultural tenancies of the study period, and by new questions raised by members of the review team and suggested by the research conducted to develop the context.

#### D. Criteria for Evaluation of Archaeological Resources

The criteria utilized by other historical archaeologists in evaluating the significance of Delaware farmsteads and agricultural tenancies, 1830-1940, were first assembled and reviewed. Also reviewed were the interim criteria presented in the **Management Plan** (De Cunzo and Catts 1990: 191-197). The project review team of Delaware historical archaeologists evaluated and discussed the successes, potential, and problems with the criteria used in the past, and the results of the research undertaken in preparing this historic context. The team then proposed a new set of criteria, outlined in this report.

#### E. Evaluation of Inventoried Archaeological Property Types

A computerized data base of inventoried historical archaeological sites in Delaware had been prepared for the **Management Plan** (De Cunzo and Catts 1990: 108-119; Appendix I). It formed the basis of a new data base for this historic context. This new data base employs the same data fields (Appendix 1). It does not include sites in Sussex County, sites not occupied during the 1830-1940 time period, and sites not associated with farming. Sites identified and added to the state's inventory since creation of the original data base were added.

All the sites in the new data base were plotted on U.S.G.S. topographic maps. All reconnaissance and intensive archaeological survey project areas were also plotted. Abstracts of all survey and cultural resource management plan reports that identified archaeological sites associated with this context are included in Appendix 2.

These data allowed evaluation of the numbers of each archaeological property type associated with farming (as defined at the start of this project) in each geographical region and county of different time periods that had been subsequently identified as archaeological sites. Although the data are incomplete, these sites' level of treatment and condition could also be discussed. Analyzing site and survey area distributions produced conclusions on the adequacy of survey coverage, and allowed identification of areas requiring further survey. Comparing the archaeological site distributions with the data presented in the historic context narrative supported and extended these conclusions.

A final important limiting factor is that the thousands of extant New Castle and Kent county farm buildings constructed between 1830 and 1940 and inventoried in historic architecture reconnaissance and intensive surveys have not been evaluated for archaeological potential. At the present time, these inventories are not computerized. Within the constraints of this project, this mass of data could not be adequately integrated into the historic

context narrative or into the evaluation of potential archaeological sites associated with this historic context. To the extent that architectural historians and preservationists in the state had already attempted to synthesize these data, their work laid a base for addressing this issue. In addition, and most importantly, archaeologists had considered the archaeological potential of surviving buildings associated with this historic context for two large cultural resource management project areas: the Route 13 By-pass/ Delaware Route 1 Corridor and the Route 301 Corridor (Figure 3). This research allowed us to begin to examine the relationship between the state's inventoried historic buildings and inventoried historical archaeological sites associated with this historic context.

#### **F. Goals, Priorities, and Information Needs**

Having completed all the previous steps in developing the historic context, goals, priorities, and information needs for the archaeological property types associated with the context could be defined. The review team contributed to this process, which resulted in a statement of goals, priorities, and information needs for identification, evaluation, registration, and treatment of the archaeological property types.

FIGURE 3

MAP OF DELAWARE SHOWING PROPOSED ROUTE 13 RELIEF ROUTE STUDY AREA AND PROPOSED ROUTE 301 STUDY AREA

